

## VOTING ON DEMANDS FOR GRANTS.

### DEMAND I—EXCISE DEPARTMENT.

**Mr. P. G. Narayanan Unnithan** (*Excise Commissioner*): Sir, I rise to move for a grant of Rs. 7,18,980 under Demand I—Excise Department.

**Mr. N. Krishna Aiyar** (*Vaikom, Kottayam and Changancherry cum Peermade*): Sir, I support the demand. It is a matter of gratification that a department which was noted for corruption is now becoming pure being placed under the capable administration of the present head.

Looking at the figures of exports and imports, viz., Rs. 43 lakhs and Rs. 7½ lakhs, one is apt to imagine that our country is industrially far in advance than it really is. But as a matter of fact we know that in comparison to the large volume of imports and the great value of the imported articles our import revenue is considerably less than what it should be. The reason is obvious. It lies in the Interportal Convention of 1040 under which the revenue is fixed on the basis of figures available more than three quarters of a century ago. Time and again the necessity of the abolition or at least revision of this convention has been agitated for, but we have not yet succeeded. I trust, however, that in view of the great constitutional changes which are imminent, Travancore's case will be considered and placed on a more equitable basis at least under this head. The only consolation, rather compensation, however, is that, against this great iniquity, we are having a fair share from the proceeds of the Cochin harbour, about a third of the net income which comes to Rs. 16 lakhs as seen in the budget of this year.

I do not propose to deal with the various heads of revenue which contribute to Rs. 1½ crores under different items of the Excise Department. I only wish to lay before Government one or two points in connection with the salt industry. It is one of the key industries in the State and brings in a revenue of about Rs. 24 lakhs. From being put to the necessity of importing a large quantity of salt from outside the State by the gradual development of the salt factory in the State, we have at present not only become self-sufficient, but we have been able to produce more than what is needed for our requirements. We produce about 20 lakhs of maunds of salt, whereas our consumption comes only to about 13.5 lakhs of maunds. And there is now a large stock of excess production available for export to outside the State. I believe we have got nearly three times the quantity that we need, for an year's consumption, I mean, the present quantity should be enough for

consumption in Travancore for three years. Since we are still producing more than the requirements for local consumption, it is high time that the Government came to the rescue of the industry as well as the licensees for finding new avenues for the export of salt to outside the State. I believe that the Government is making some arrangements with other States and Provinces in British India for taking up the excess quantity of the production here. The time has come when this is to be pushed on in the interests of the industry so that the excess production may find an adequate sale outside the State. The Government may add to its revenue by levying a small cess on the export of the excess salt. The Government and the Department have been vigorously trying to restrict the production as well as the sale by resorting to strict measures. They have abolished one of the seasons in most of the factories. They have also insisted upon the production of a better quality of salt. In the matter of sales they have introduced what is called the quota system, as a result of which the limited profit of the licensees has been brought to the minimum. But this has adversely affected the licensees in certain ways, namely, that the cost of production has considerably increased. Since the cost of production has always to be taken by the ratio on the out-put, and since the quantity of production and the quantity of sales have been affected by the restriction, the cost of production, apart from becoming less, has now become much more on account of the conditions of increased wages, increased transport charges, and increase in the price of materials that are required for the manufacture of salt. I pointed out yesterday when dealing with the essentials of cultivation, the abnormal rise in the price of crude oil and lubricants which are all required for working the machines in the salt factory too. There are other materials which are required for the working of the factory. As it is, salt is the only commodity the price of which has not risen, but remains the same as it was. This will materially affect the income of the licensees who are now put into additional difficulties on account of the increased cost of production dependant on the general situation. Therefore it is the duty of Government to pay some more attention to the facts mentioned above and to see that the licensees get the required materials for the manufacture of salt. I shall be the last person to ask for the enhancement of the licensees' dues. The price of salt has to be kept down. Therefore the only way in which those who are interested in the industry and the licensees can be helped is by facilitating their getting the required materials and by arranging the system of manufacture in such a way that the cost of production is at a fixed ratio to the output and the sales.

[Mr. N. Krishna Aiyar.]

Of course, there has been an agitation on the part of the licensees for restoring both the seasons for the production of salt. But it will not be advantageous to have over-production of a large quantity being kept up. So what the department has done in regard to this is quite right. But the conditions of rainfall and the facilities for getting the brine in respect of each factory should be carefully considered and in respect of these factories which are adversely affected by seasonal causes, the number of working months should be increased. If that is done the ordinary requirements of many of the factories can be kept up without impairing the system of working. Of course it is note-worthy that the department has been able to systematize the working of the factories.

The monopoly system has been modified and therefore the same kind of working is now available in all the factories but with this difference that there are varying conditions in each factory which should receive better attention from Government and particularly by the Department so that the number of working months may be enhanced or reduced according to the out-put and other circumstances.

One other matter which I wish to point out to Government is that Government should take up the outside supply directly instead of allowing competitors to compete with their rivals at competitive terms outside the State. In fact if the Government would take up the supply to neighbouring States, Cochin for example, or other provinces, it would be very advantageous. And the State may also get an additional revenue if they impose a small cess on the quantity of salt exported.

**Mr. James Fletcher** (*Kalkulam and Vilavankod cum Neyyattinkara*): I support the motion. At the same time I desire to make one or two observations. A certain amount of salt is given duty free for purposes of preparation of manures, for fish-curing purposes and for industrial purposes. Especially when manure is not available to Travancore from outside sources, more manure will have to be prepared in Travancore. It is my desire and my prayer that Government may be pleased to set apart more duty-free salt for purposes of manufacture of manure, fish-curing and for industrial purpose. It is in the Government's power to set apart more for these purposes.

I desire to make another observation, Sir, in South Travancore there is no need for obtaining a license for tapping sweet toddy. This privilege is given to the tappers of South Travancore up to Neyyattinkara, but in the Trivandrum taluk

licenses have to be taken. On account of the necessity for taking licenses, a number of trees along the coast, especially in the Trivandrum taluk near Shunkumukhom side, are left without being tapped.

**Mr. V. Sankara Menon** (*Trivandrum and Nedumangad cum Chirayinkil*): May I know why the distinction is made between South Travancore tappers and Trivandrum taluk tappers?

**Mr. James Fletcher**: I cannot give the reason; but that is the fact. Indeed, there is no reason, I may say. My submission is that the distinction may be taken away so that the people in the Trivandrum taluk may be allowed to tap without the necessity of taking licenses. I press that point specially now for this reason. Sweet toddy is used as a food and it is said that it contains a lot of nutritious matter. It is hard therefore to see that this food material is allowed to be wasted for want of encouragement given to the people.

**Sahib Bahadur T. Muhammed Ismail** (*Nominated*): May I know whether the member is encouraging drink?

**Mr. James Fletcher**: Sweet toddy is not an alcoholic drink. It is just like any other drink which is harmless and very nutritious. It is a very good tonic and is widely used by the people. I have seen people taking this drink and doing very hard work because it has got so much of food materials in it. So, my prayer is that licences should not be made compulsory for tapping sweet toddy along the coast of the Trivandrum taluk where there are a large number of palmyra trees. It would be of very great help to the people of that locality for they can have a certain amount of food materials from those trees. So I pray that the Excise Department may find its way to allow the tappers of sweet toddy to carry on their work without licence.

**Mr. G. Narayana Aiyar**: Sir, I also support the demand and congratulate the Commissioner on the success of his Department in various directions. Salt is an essential article of food. It is very gratifying to find that salt has improved in quality very much. When we have got the monopoly and over-production of salt it is high time that the Government took some steps to reduce the price of salt. Salt is allowed to be manufactured for domestic purposes in British India. There was a time when we had to depend on outside countries for our requirements. But now when there is over-production and also the possibility of producing more salt I request the Government to take necessary steps so that the value of salt is brought down at least to the level which is prevailing in British India. Under the Interportal Convention it may be necessary

[Mr. G. Narayana Aiyar]

for the Government to levy a cess. That Government cannot forgo. Besides that amount they are charging nearly 10 as. in the maund as incidental charges such as stock and recovery to maintain certain stalls etc. There was a necessity for such charges in olden days when the Government were maintaining a large number of bankshalls. Now all those difficulties are over and a large number of the stalls have been abolished. The expenses under that item has ceased to exist. So there is no justification to charge such amounts now. So, I request that Government will be pleased to stop realising such charges so that it may be possible to be sold at a very cheap rate. It is a very essential commodity required by the poorest of the poor. I therefore request that the Government will be pleased to arrange to have the salt sold at a cheaper rate at least in these days of severe distress as a temporary measure. In this connection, I would like to bring to the notice of the Government that there are possibilities of producing salt in certain places in North Travancore. In Puthenvelikara pakuthi in Parur taluk salt is being manufactured though without the knowledge of the Department and that there are big possibilities of salt production.

**Mr. K. M. Kesavan :** May I know whether it is not an offence?

**Mr. P. G. Narayanan Unnithan :** Sir, I may inform the House that cases are being taken.

**Mr. G. Narayana Aiyar :** Yes, Sir, it is an offence when detected. So it is an admission on the part of the Department that there is the possibility of production of salt in North Travancore also. Why not steps be taken then if there is the possibility of producing more salt there.

Salt is used not only for consumption but for other purposes also. In the Administration Report of the University of Travancore it is stated at page 26 that out of a large quantity of salt waste bitters large quantities of useful chemicals such as gypsum, bromide, magnesium chloride etc., could be successfully manufactured. So the waste could be used and that is a source of very great income. Steps should be taken to see that such materials are properly preserved and converted into chemicals. That is another reason why I say that encouragement should be given for the manufacture of salt in North Travancore also.

As I said last year there is scope for retrenchment in this Department. Now there are 28 chowkeys on the Trivandrum Shencotta Railway line. The policy of the Government should be to establish chowkeys only at the boundaries. There are a number of chowkeys within the State itself. What is the income that we derive from these chowkeys? I am able to know from the

Administration Report that there are 11 chowkeys where the income is far below Rs. 300. There are chowkeys the income from which is Rs. 12,92,133,142,192 and so on. To maintain a chowkey at least 2 officers are necessary whose salary will far exceed the income. So I submit that at least those chowkeys which are not self-supporting may be abolished. The policy of the British Indian Government and the Cochin Government is to establish chowkeys only at the frontier. So I would request Government to kindly consider whether it is advisable to continue those chowkeys which are not self-supporting.

**Mr. M. K. Ananthasiva Aiyar:** May I know whether they do not serve as preventive stations?

**Mr. G. Narayana Aiyar.** Certainly not. It is within the State itself that we are having these chowkeys. What is the sort of prevention that is expected within the State itself where we are not prohibited from carrying dutiable articles?

It is gratifying to note that we have exported 30,000 maunds of salt to the Cochin State in 1116. The demand of the Cochin State is greater and if the Government adopt the policy of exporting salt to British India also, that will be a source of revenue to the State. With these words I support the motion.

**Mr. Thomas Chandy Mukkadan** (*Nominated*): അഴിമതികൾ ഏറ്റവും കൂടിയിരുന്ന ഒന്നാണ് എക്സൈസ് ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെന്റ്. ഇപ്പോഴത്തെ ഭരണാധിപൻ അതിന്റെ മേധാവിയായി വന്നതിനുശേഷം അഴിമതികൾ വളരെ കുറഞ്ഞിട്ടുണ്ട്. മാത്രമല്ല, അതിനു ഒരു പാവനചരിത്രംതന്നെ സൃഷ്ടിക്കപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുണ്ടെന്നുംകൂടി പ്രസ്താവിക്കുവാൻ എനിക്കു സന്തോഷമുണ്ട്. പക്ഷെ കീഴ്ജോഗസ്ഥനമാരുടെ അഴിമതികൾ ഇനിയും വേണ്ടപ്രകാരത്തിൽ നീങ്ങിയിട്ടില്ല. ഭരണസംബന്ധമായ കാര്യത്തിൽ ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെന്റലുക്കുന്റെ ഉത്തരജപസ്ഥലതയും ശ്രദ്ധേയമായ നോട്ടവും ജനങ്ങൾക്കു വളരെ ഗുണകരമായിത്തീർന്നിട്ടുണ്ട്. നമ്മുടെ നാട്ടിലെ കീഴ്ജീവനക്കാരിൽ പലരും കൈക്കൂലിവാങ്ങുവാൻ സ്വയം പ്രേരിതരായിത്തീർന്നത് അവരുടെ ശമ്പളക്കുറവുകൊണ്ടാണെന്നുള്ളത് പരമാത്ഥമാണ്.

**Mr. M. K. Ananthasiva Aiyar:** ശമ്പളക്കുറവുള്ള ആളുകളും കൈക്കൂലി വാങ്ങിക്കുന്നില്ലേ?

**Mr. Thomas Chandy Mukkadan:** ഉണ്ടായിരിക്കാം. എന്നാൽ അതു രാജ്യത്തിലെ വലിയ പരരന്മാരുടെ പ്രേരണാശക്തികൊണ്ടാണ് എന്നാണു ഞാൻ മനസ്സിലാക്കിയിട്ടുള്ളത്. സാധുക്കളായ കീഴ്

[Mr. Thomas Chandy Makkadan]

സിൽബസ്ഥികൾ കൈക്കൂലി വാങ്ങുന്നതു അങ്ങനെയുള്ള ഒരു പ്രേരണാ ശക്തികൊണ്ടല്ല. അത് അവർക്കു ജീവിക്കാനുള്ള വൈഷമ്യം ഒന്നുകൊണ്ടുമാത്രമാണ്. മാത്രമല്ല, സാധാരണയായി ഇവർ കൈക്കൂലി വാങ്ങിക്കുമെന്നുള്ള ഒരു രഹസ്യധാരണ ഗവർണ്മെന്റിനും ഉള്ളതുപോലെ തോന്നുന്നു. അതുകൊണ്ടാണ് അവർക്കു ശമ്പളക്കൂട്ടൽ കൊടുക്കുന്നതിനു ഗവർണ്മെന്റ് വൈമുഖ്യം പ്രകടിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്.

ഈ രാജ്യത്തിന്റെ മുതലെടുപ്പിൽ ഏകദേശം പകുതിയോളം എക്സൈസ് ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെന്റിൽ നിന്നാണ് കിട്ടുന്നത്. എക്സൈസ് ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെന്റ് മേലധ്യക്ഷന്റെ മേൽനോട്ടത്തിലാണെങ്കിലും ഈ പ്രവർത്തനം മുഴുവനും നടത്തുന്നത് മിക്കവാറും കീഴ്സിൽബസ്ഥികളാണ്. ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെന്റിന്റെ വരവിനു കുറവുവരുത്താതെ സൂക്ഷിക്കുക, ജനങ്ങൾക്കു യാതൊരു തരത്തിലും ഉപദ്രവം നേരിടാതെ നോക്കുക; നിയമപരമായ മറ്റു കാര്യങ്ങൾ നിർവഹിക്കുക, മുതലായവ ഈ കീഴ്സിൽബസ്ഥികളാണ് നിർവഹിക്കുന്നത്. ഇതു ഗൗരവതരമായ ചുമതലകൾ വഹിക്കേണ്ടതായിരിക്കുന്ന ഈ കീഴ്സിൽബസ്ഥികൾക്കു ശമ്പളക്കൂട്ടൽ കൊടുക്കേണ്ടത് അത്യാവശ്യമാണ്. എന്നാൽ ഇതിനു എങ്ങനെയാണ് പണമുണ്ടാകുന്നത് എന്നൊരു ചോദ്യം വരാം. പറയത്തക്ക ജോലി ഒന്നുമില്ലാത്തവർ ഈ ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെന്റിലുണ്ട്. എക്സൈസ് ഇൻസ്പെക്ടറുമാരും റേഞ്ച് ഇൻസ്പെക്ടറുമാരും ശരിയായി അവരുടെ ജോലികൾ നിർവഹിക്കുന്ന പക്ഷം അസിസ്റ്റന്റ് കമ്മീഷണർ ഉദ്യോഗത്തിന്റെ ആവശ്യമില്ല. അങ്ങനെയുള്ള ഉദ്യോഗങ്ങൾ നിറുത്തിയാൽ അവരുടെ ശമ്പളത്തുകയിൽനിന്ന് പ്രതിമാസം ഒന്നോ രണ്ടോ രൂപാവിതം പ്യൂൺസിനു കൊടുക്കാൻ മതിയാകുന്ന ഒരു തുക അതിൽനിന്നും ലഭിക്കാവുന്നതാണ്. ഒരു കൊല്ലംകൊണ്ടു അഞ്ചോപത്തോ ഉദ്യോഗങ്ങൾ നിറുത്താൻ സാധിക്കുകയില്ലെങ്കിൽ ഈ തത്വം ഗവർണ്മെന്റ് അംഗീകരിച്ചിട്ട് ഓരോകൊല്ലം ഒന്നോരണ്ടോ ഉദ്യോഗങ്ങൾ വീതം നിറുത്തി കാലക്രമത്തിൽ ഇതു മുഴുവനും നിറുത്തലാക്കുകയും, കീഴ്സിൽബസ്ഥികളെ കഴിയുന്നിടത്തോളം സഹായിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യേണ്ടതിന്റെ ആവശ്യമുണ്ട്.

ഇന്നത്തെ പരിതഃസ്ഥിതിക്കു കഴിയുന്നിടത്തോളം സ്വദേശത്തുതന്നെ കീഴ്സിൽബസ്ഥികൾക്കു ജോലികൊടുക്കേണ്ടതിന്റെയും ആവശ്യമുണ്ട്. ഞാൻ ധരിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത് ഒരിടത്തു മൂന്നുകൊല്ലം ജോലി നോക്കുന്ന ആളുകളെ അവിടെനിന്നും മാറ്റാൻ ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെന്റ് അധ്യക്ഷന്മാർ

നിർബന്ധിതരായിത്തീരുന്ന നിയമമാണ് ഇപ്പോഴുള്ളതെന്നാണ്. ആ നിയമം മാറ്റി നിവൃത്തിയുള്ളിട്ടുതോളം അവരുടെ സ്വഭാവങ്ങളിൽ തന്നെ അവരെ നിയമിക്കേണ്ടതാണ്.

മദ്യവിൽപ്പനസംബന്ധിച്ച് ഒരു കാര്യം എനിക്കു പറയുവാനുണ്ട്. ഇപ്പോഴത്തെ മദ്യവിൽപ്പന സംപ്രദായം ആളുകളെ ഘിഷ്ടിക്കുന്ന ഒന്നാണ്. മനുഷ്യശരീരത്തിനു യാതൊരു ദുഷ്ടവും വരുത്താത്ത മദ്യമായിരിക്കണം മദ്യപ്പാലുകളിൽ വിൽക്കുവാൻ എന്നാണ് നിയമം. എന്നാൽ ഉൾപ്രദേശങ്ങളിൽപ്പോയി പരിശോധിച്ചുനോക്കിയാൽ മദ്യമല്ല, വിഷമാണ് അവിടെ വിൽക്കുന്നതെന്ന് കാണാം. എക്സൈസ് കമ്മീഷണർ അവർകൾക്ക് തന്നെ ഇതൊന്നു പരിശോധിച്ചുനോക്കിയാൽ അറിവാൻ കഴിയുന്നതാണ്. പുളിച്ചതും ശരിയായിട്ടുള്ളതല്ലാത്തതും ആയ മദ്യം ആണ് അവിടെ വിൽക്കുന്നത്.

എന്റെ സ്റ്റേഫിതൻ മി. ഫീച്ചർ മധുരക്കള്ളിനെപ്പറ്റി പ്രസ്ഥാവിക്കുകയുണ്ടായി. ഏറ്റവും രുചികരമായതും ആരോഗ്യത്തെ പ്രദാനം ചെയ്യുന്നതുമായ നല്ല ഒരു പാനീയമാണ് അത്. അതിനു പലഹരിയില്ല. എക്സൈസ് കമ്മീഷണർ അവർകൾ തന്നെ അതിന്റെ ഒരു സാമ്പിൾ കൂടി ഇവിടെ കൊണ്ടുവന്നു കാണിച്ചാൽ കൊള്ളാമെന്നുകൂടി എനിക്കു അഭിപ്രായമുണ്ട്.

**Mr. K. M. Kesavan:** ഇത് സാധാരണ കള്ളമായിട്ട് എന്താണ് വ്യത്യാസം?

**Mr. Thomas Chandy Mukkadan:** ഇത് സാധാരണ കള്ളല്ല. ഇതിനു പലഹരി ഒട്ടുമില്ല. ഒരു മാതിരി ചുവന്ന നിറമാണ് ഇതിനുള്ളത്. ദേഹത്തിനു തണുപ്പുകൊടുക്കുന്നതും ഏറ്റവും രുചികരമായതും ശരീരത്തിനു യാതൊരു ദുഷ്ടവും ചെയ്യാത്തതുമായ ഒരു പാനീയമാണ് ഇത്. ഇത് ആർക്കും ജാതിമതഭേദമന്യേ ഉപയോഗിക്കാവുന്നതാണ്. “ആരോറട്ട്” ഫീച്ചറും (കുവപ്പൊടിയും) ഇതുകൂടി ചേർത്ത് പഡിംഗ് ഉണ്ടാക്കിയാൽ എന്റെ സ്റ്റേഫിതൻ മി. കിട്ടൻ പറഞ്ഞതുപോലെ ഒരു ഒന്നാതരം ആഹാരമായിത്തീരും. ആ തരത്തിൽ വ്യാവസായികമായി വളരെ പുരോഗമനരീതിയിൽ ഉപയോഗപ്പെടുത്തുവാൻ കഴിവുള്ള ഒരു സാധനമാണ് ഈ മധുരക്കള്ളം. മധുരക്കള്ളിൽനിന്നും പാനി എന്ന ഒരു വിശിഷ്ട സാധനം ഉണ്ടാക്കാവുന്നതാണ്. അതുകൊണ്ട് ജല്ലി ഉണ്ടാക്കുന്നതിനും സാധിക്കുന്നതത്രെ. ഡിപ്പാർട്ട്മെന്റ് കാലോചിതമായി പരിഷ്കരിക്കണമെന്ന ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്ന ഒരു മേഖലയെക്കുറിച്ച്, വ്യാവസായികപുരോഗമനത്തിനു വ

Mr. Thomas Chandy Mukkadan]

ഉരെ സാധ്യതകളുള്ള ഈ മധുരക്കുളികൊണ്ട് ഉണ്ടാക്കാവുന്ന നാനാതര സാധനങ്ങളുടെ നിർമ്മാണസൗകര്യത്തെ ഉദ്ദേശിച്ച മധുരക്കുളി ചെത്തി എടുക്കുന്നതിനു ധാരാളം ലൈസൻസുകൾ ഏർപ്പെടുത്തേണ്ടതാണ്. ഇതിനു വലിയ പ്രോപ്പഗാൻഡാ വർക്കിന്റെ ആവശ്യമൊന്നുമില്ല. ജനങ്ങൾക്കു ഇതറിയാം. എന്നാൽ ഇതു മേൽക്കൂലിയായ ഒരു കൃത്യമാണെന്നു വിചാരിച്ചു മാന്യരായ ആളുകൾ ഇതിൽ ഏർപ്പെടാത്തതുകൊണ്ടുള്ള ന്യൂനത മാത്രമാണുള്ളത്. തിരുവിതാംകൂറിൽതന്നെ പല റസ്റ്ററൻറുകൾ ഉണ്ട്. അവിടെപ്പോകുന്നതിനു ആർക്കും ഒരു മടിയും ഇല്ല. സ്ഥാനസ്ഥിതിഭേദം അവിടെയില്ല. അവിടെ ഈ മധുരക്കുളി ഉപയോഗപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതിന് കഴിവുള്ള പ്രോത്സാഹനങ്ങൾ ചെയ്താൽ ഇതിന്റെ ഉപയോഗം താനേ പ്രചരിച്ചുകൊള്ളും. ഏതൊരു ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെന്റിലെയും പോലെതന്നെ ഈ ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെന്റിലെയും കീഴ്സിൽബന്ധികൾ ജോലിചെയ്യുന്നതു മുദ്രമുദ്രപ്പോടും സമാധാനക്കുറവോടുകൂടിയുമാണ്. അവർക്കുശമ്പളക്കൂട്ടതലം പ്രോത്സാഹനവും നൽകണം. നമ്മുടെ രാജ്യത്തെ മുതലെടുപ്പ് വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കുവാൻ അത്യാന്തപരിശ്രമം ചെയ്യുന്ന ഒരു സന്നദ്ധസംഘമാണ് അവർ എന്നുവേണം വിചാരിക്കുവാൻ. അതുകൊണ്ട് അവർക്കു യാതൊരു തരത്തിലുള്ള ഉന്മേഷക്കുറവും ഉണ്ടാക്കരുതെന്നു ഞാൻ ഗവർണ്മെന്റിനോടു പ്രത്യേകം അപേക്ഷിച്ചുകൊള്ളുന്നു.

Mr. K. M. Kesavan : Sir, I also support the motion. In doing so I have to make a few observations. But before that a word of thanks is due to the Government and to the honourable member in charge of this Department for what they have done in response to my representation. I spoke last year that the designation of the peons and petty officers in the Excise department should be changed so that it might be in keeping with their self-respect. In response to that representation, a change has been made in their designation and I thank the Government sincerely for what they have done.

Sir, with regard to the views on the manufacture of salt and the profit made thereby, I am sorry that I cannot agree with Mr. N. Krishna Aiyar. He was advocating the present system of issuing licences to contractors for successive years. They are not at all carrying on the manufacture at a loss. They are not losers even now, only they have to forego a small amount of their profits. I do suggest, as I have often suggested, that this system of manufacturing salt by issuing licences to individuals should be stopped. But it need not be stopped at once on a sudden because there may arise very many difficulties by doing so. I do realise that the contractors have

invested large sums of money on this manufacture and the Government are under certain contractual obligations to them in respect of this Industry. It will, I think, be possible for the Government in future to pursue a policy by which no fresh licence be issued to the present contractors when their present term of contract expires. And by such a process gradually nationalisation can be effected so far as the salt industry is concerned. Nationalisation is needed not for over-producing. But it is conducive also to our self-respect.

**Mr. V. Sankara Menon :** May I know what the connection between self-respect and production of salt is?

**Mr. K. M. Kesavan :** Self-respect consists in the fact that the people may feel proud that their country is producing more salt, not only for home consumption but also for sale outside. Sir, there is no harm in the production of any amount of salt as it is essential for manurial purposes especially at this time when we are launching on an intensive cultivation. If salt can be made available to the ordinary agriculturists for a nominal price we can increase the total output of food crops in the State to a considerable extent.

**Mr. T. W. U. Park (Travancore Planters) :** May I know whether salt is now over-produced?

**Mr. K. M. Kesavan :** Yes, to some extent.

**Mr. T. W. U. Park :** May I know whether salt can be used for manure for all crops?

**Mr. K. M. Kesavan :** I am not an expert in that line. But I can say that salt is a good manure especially for cocoanut trees.

Now, Sir, with regard to the manufacture of sweet toddy, I am not fully aware of its food value or its reactions on the human system. But all the same, I think, we ought to encourage the manufacture of sweet toddy not on the ground of its use as a beverage but for producing cocoanut jaggery. Now, we have not enough sugar in the State to satisfy the need of the people. But it is said that arrangements are being made for import of large quantities of sugar from North India. If the manufacture of jaggery from our sweet toddy is encouraged, I think there will be no necessity for importing sugar from outside the State. Jaggery can be consumed as such also without converting it into sugar.

Sir, I have a word to say about the necessity of levying higher rates of duty on the export of prawn skins, punnac, and laurel and other oil cakes. Prawn skin is supposed to be a very valuable manure particularly for paddy cultivation. But this prawn skin is exported on a very large scale. Now, owing to the difficulties that have arisen on account of the war this export has been stopped. So also Punnac and laurel cakes were being exported in large quantities.

**Mr. P. G. Narayanan Unnithan :** May I inform the honourable member that it is not the prawn skins but it is the prawns that were exported?

**Mr. K. M. Kesavan :** In that case the condition is still worse. So, Sir, steps may be taken to levy a heavy duty on the export of these materials which possess a high manurial value.

Sir, it has been decided to increase the cess on rubber. I may suggest to Government in this connection that this cess may be levied not only on rubber but on similar other products whose prices have considerably increased. I mean, our timber which is very largely exported, has gone very high in value. So also, cardamom and tea.

**President :** Tea has already been subjected to export duty.

**Mr. K. M. Kesavan :** Sir, my suggestion is that the present rate of duty should be increased. This is to be done in order to find funds for ameliorative works. With these words I support the motion.

**Sahib Bahadur T. Muhammed Ismail :** Sir, I was rather amused to hear a change of tendency noticed in this House from what it was some years ago. At the time when the demand for Excise is taken up for discussion we used to hear speeches in favour of prohibition. I remember occasions in the previous years when many honourable members of the Legislature got up and advocated the policy of prohibition tirading on the evils of drink. Resolutions were also tabled and discussed on those occasions and the reply of Government has been that in the interest of the State's revenue it was not feasible to adopt a total prohibition policy but they assured that they were trying their best to decrease the number of toddy shops and to remove them from important towns especially those that were situated near schools, churches and mosques etc., as a beginning in the direction of prohibition. Now, Sir, we are also hearing that in the British Indian Provinces prohibition has been effected, especially in Madras, though not with complete success. I need not here dwell upon how prohibition was attempted in America. Everybody knows about it. Still, I say, that it must be the policy of the Government, in spite of the suggestion made by Mr. Thomas Chandy Makkadan that Government should encourage the manufacture of sweet toddy as it is a good tonic for the health of the people.

**Mr. Thomas Chandy Makkadan :** സർ, ലഹരിക്കുള്ള കൂടുതലായി കൊടുത്തു ജനങ്ങളെ ഓഷിപ്പിക്കണമെന്നല്ല, വിൽക്കുന്ന കള്ളം നല്ലതായിരിക്കണമെന്നാണ് എന്റെ പ്രസ്താവനയിൽ ഉദ്ദേശിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളതെന്നു മെമ്പർക്കറിയാമോ?

**Sahib Bahadur T. Muhammed Ismail:** I fully understood what the honourable member meant by his statements. There is no misunderstanding in that matter. But, Sir, it is quite likely that when the sweet toddy is brought into the house naturally the temptation will be to get it fermented for drinking purposes. Sir, almost all many crimes that are being committed, are due to this drink evil. In courts it has been proved that most of the murders were committed after the culprit got himself drunk. It is well known that most of the murder cases occur from the Meenachil taluk where this evil is widespread and rampant. My request therefore, is, that in spite of the fact that it brings in a large revenue to the State, the policy of the Government should be for total prohibition. We can get additional revenue to compensate the loss from Customs and from other items. With these words I support the demand.

**Mrs. Abernam Gnanasikhamony (Nominated):** Sir, I too support the demand. In doing so I should like to point out one fact regarding the poor coolies who work in the salt factories. Salt is the only commodity the price of which remains unbothered. Yet the hardships of the coolies who work in the salt factories are many. They do not even get good drinking water. Their wages are not being paid systematically. There are coolies in the factories who have not received their wages for weeks. Representations were also made to Government by Labour Associations. It is very essential that the Government should be particular about theft and about the refining etc.; but it is their duty also to see to the welfare of these coolies. The licensees do get good interest on the money invested in these salt factories and the Government also derive a good profit by the least expenditure from this source. So, Government are bound to look to the needs of these poor coolies who work in these factories. The health of these coolies who work continuously in the salt factories is also much affected. Most of them are aenemic and a good proportion of them meet with premature death. So, I appeal to the Government that they should make proper investigation in the matter and do what is necessary.

**Mr. Kochikal P. Balakrishnan Tampi:** Sir, I rise to support the demand and to congratulate the Department on its very efficient work. I am glad that Mr. Mukkadan has referred to the possibilities of this Department. Without sharing in the traditional fear of toddy, I can say that the department ought to encourage the manufacture of sweet toddy which will certainly sell well. It has a rare food value, nay, even the vitamin value, if properly manufactured. If suitably bottled it will easily replace beer and we will come to that stage when the Travancore toddy would be taken up as a fashionable drink. I do not view it with any melancholy as my honourable friend Mr. Ismail does on the question of drink.

**Mr. T. Krishna Pillai** (*Kalkulam and Vilavankod cum Neyyattinkara*): May I know whether beer has anything by way of intoxicating one who takes to it?

**Mr. Kochikal P. Balakrishnan Tampi**: Yes it is so. But sweet toddy is not. Mr. Ismail was rather dissatisfied, not melancholy, when he thought of the gradual change of opinion in this matter. I only congratulate myself for being a member of this house which is responsive to world opinion. It is true, Sir, that on the floor of Travancore Legislatures such rigid and formal ideas were given expression to at one time against drink. The time was possibly when Dr. Woodrow Wilson was just emerging with his fourteen points in America. But the world opinion has changed as will be seen from the fate of prohibition in America. Even in Provinces in British India, people who in obedience to some pledge they gave at election time, formed governments with doctrinaire views. Even there it was found that the prohibition laws were not very effective in working. First of all, it affected the revenue of the State and secondly, it was found very difficult to achieve real prohibition. As my honourable friend Mr. Mukkadan suggested, instead of supplying drinks of certain standard and strength, bootlegging was freely resorted to and drinking of this illicit stuff caused very great harm to health. Apart from these sentimental or health reasons I want to impress upon this house that prohibition will affect our public revenue. Without finding out an alternative source of income it is mere Sunday preaching to say that we must abolish this income altogether.

**Mr. P. G. Narayanan Unnithan**: Sir, I thank the honourable members for appreciating the work done by the Department and myself not only in the matter of putting down corruption but also in the matter of increasing the income of the Department. Almost all sections of the Department were touched by the honourable members during the discussion and it might be possible for me only to refer briefly to the points raised by them. Honourable members are aware, that in the matter of salt, we are producing much more than what we require and so reduction in the manufacturing months was necessitated. Even now, I may inform the honourable members that we have got in stock about 40 lakhs of maunds of salt which would be more than enough for 3 years' consumption in the State. Government are also trying to find out markets outside for our surplus salt. It must be borne in mind that there is difficulty in the matter of transport. And under the Interportal Trade Agreement it is not possible to export salt as a matter of course. Now however there is demand for salt in North India. But difficulty in transport still remains. If this difficulty is surmounted we can dispose of our surplus salt. This year we are sending about 75,000 maunds of salt to Cochin.

About the necessity for permitting some factories to continue the manufacture throughout the year, I may submit to this honourable House that rules were so made as to allow manufacture in special cases within the limits of those rules.

It is not possible to make exceptions in regard to some factories especially because there will be difficulty in excluding others. If any special concession is shown to a factory for any special reason, for instance if new factories are to be given permission to manufacture salt throughout the year, then there will be three or four factories coming under this category and therefore that will defeat the purpose for which restriction has been placed.

About the price of salt reference was made by more than one honourable member. In regard to the issue price, this Government is not at liberty to fix their own price. We have under certain trade agreements, undertaken to keep the prices at a certain level. Apart from that there is no complaint of exploitation by the merchants. As was rightly remarked by some honourable members, the price of salt alone has not gone up under war conditions. That itself shows that the price of salt has not been meddled with by the merchants as they have been doing with other essential commodities. It was also mentioned in regard to the manufacture of salt that the licensees are finding it difficult to get adequate return because the price of materials like oil, which is required for pumping, has gone up. I think that is not correct. It is possible for the licensee to make a decent margin of profit even now because he gets 10 annas for a maund. His working expense is still very low.

**Mr. G. Narayana Aiyar :** May I know the condition laid down in the Interportal Convention regarding the price of salt?

**Mr. P. G. Narayanan Unnithan :** Salt duty is the same as in British India; we are bound to adopt the same selling price of salt as in British India.

**Mr. G. Narayana Aiyar :** Will it not be somewhat lower than the present rate obtaining here?

**Mr. P. G. Narayanan Unnithan :** The price in British India is the same as in Travancore.

Sir, in regard to customs work at the Railway Stations one honourable member said that some railway customs chowkeys may be abolished and some others retained. Through the railway customs chowkeys, considerable revenue is realised. It is not possible to take away some of those chowkeys and retain a few others. The customs barriers have to be completed and as such they cannot be abolished. From the customs chowkeys at Trivandrum and Quilon,

[Mr. P. G. Narayanan Unnithan]  
the department is able to make good revenue. Again, other chowkeys like Kadakavur Railway chowkey too are necessary as customs barriers. We must always have customs barriers to realise customs duty.

**Mr. G. Narayana Aiyar :** May I know how the Pettah station is useful from the point of view of customs revenue?

**Mr. P. G. Narayanan Unnithan :** I should say that all the railway customs chowkeys are as important as any frontier customs House. Articles which are taken from one station to another within Travancore are not liable to duty. We issue passes for such transport of articles. I was only referring to the fact that it is not possible to take away the customs restrictions in some places and retain them in certain other Railway Stations.

In regard to the establishment of a frontier chowkey at the geographical frontier at Bagavathipuram, I may say that this matter was dealt with by me during the last Budget session. I would invite the honourable member's attention to the proceedings of the last year's Session.

About sweet toddy, my position is that it may be very good food but the difficulty to preserve it as sweet toddy has to be faced. If there is any process by which that could be retained as sweet toddy without fermenting that may be adopted.

**Sahib Bahadur T. Muhammed Ismail :** Is it not very easy to convert sweet toddy to ordinary toddy?

**Mr. P. G. Narayanan Unnithan :** Yes. It ferments itself.

**President :** The question before the House is that Government be granted a sum of Rs. 7,18,980—under Demand I—Excise Department.

The motion was put and carried.

The grant was made.

## DEMAND II—LAND REVENUE AND TAXES ON INCOME.

**Mr. K. Kunjan Pillai** (*Secretary to Government in charge*): I rise to move for a grant not exceeding Rs. 9,13,550 under Demand II—Land Revenue and Taxes on Income.

**Mr. N. Krishna Aiyar :** Sir, I wish to make some observations on this Demand. I have already adverted yesterday about the necessity for Government to revise the present policy in the matter of registry, rather the policy pursued by them in the matter of evictions of *bona fide* agriculturists from the occupied areas. I do not wish to dilate on that subject except to reiterate and request the Government that there are very large number of